(b) In the Eleventh Plan, the Spices Board has proposed setting up of six Spices Parks in the major spice growing centres of the country for processing and value addition of various spices at a total financial outlay of Rs.62.32 crore. The units to be set up in the parks by the spices exporters are proposed to be provided with common cleaning, processing, grading, packing and warehousing facilities against a fixed user fee. The exporters in these Parks can avail the benefits of the export development/promotion schemes like assistance (33% of the cost of the plant and machinery) for setting up of hi-tech units for high-end value addition and export, financial support for sending business samples abroad, printing of brochures, participation in international fairs etc.

c) The Locations identified for spices parks are:–

(i) Chhindwara district in Madhya Pradesh for dehydrated garlic and green chilli extraction.

(ii) Idukki district in Kerala for cardamom and pepper.

(iii) Erode in Tamil Nadu for turmeric

(iv) Guntur in Andhra Pradesh for chillies

(v) Barabanki district/Rampur district in Uttar Pradesh for mint and mint products, and

(vi) Kota/Jalore districts of Rajasthan for coriander, cumin, fennel and fenugreek.

(d) The Spices Board has identified these locations based on production concentration of the identified crops, lack of infrastructure for cleaning, grading, packing and godown facilities and scope for investment by private entrepreneurs for value addition of spices for export and domestic market. The average size of the park may be around 100-200 acres depending on the land available/provided by the concerned State Government for the purpose.

(e) and (f) The concerned State Governments are required to provide land to the Spices Board for establishing the spices park. The Spices Board will be the nodal agency for the implementation of this scheme. The concerned 'State Government or its nominated agency will be associated in the process.

MPEDA links with Indian Ocean Tuna Commission

1680. SHRI V. HANUMANTHA RAO: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Marine Products Export Development Authority (MPEDA) developed links with Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC);

(b) the nature of MPEDA's links and institutional arrangement with IOTC;

(c) in what way does MPEDA have the technical expertise to implement the IOTC's agenda in India;

(d) whether it is a fact that MPEDA organized and visited foreign countries to tie-up its interest with IOTC; and

(e) the steps proposed to cancel all such agreements by MPEDA involving distracting activities?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) and (b) No, Sir. The Marine Products Export Development Authority (MPEDA) is only a member of the Working Group set up by the Ministry of Agriculture - the nodal Ministry for monitoring and implementation of resolutions of the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC). MPEDA participates in the meetings of the Group only as and when invited.

(c) to (e) Does not arise in view of (a) and (b) above.

Ban on import of rice of phyto-sanitary grounds by Russia

1681. SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA:
SHRI GIREESH KUMAR SANGHI:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Russia has banned the import of rice from India on phyto-sanitary and sanitary grounds;

(b) whether Government has ascertained the objections by Russian importers;

(c) if so, whether such objections are in the conformity with the WTO regulations in this respect; and

(d) what steps are being taken to remove such non-tariff restrictions on the Indian farm exports?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Yes, sir. It has been ascertained from the Russian authorities that the ban was on account of detection of Aflatoxin and inadmissible levels of pesticide residues.

(c) Russia has not yet acceded to the WTO and is therefore not obliged to comply with of WTO regulations.

(d) Following the steps taken by the Government to sign a protocol, the ban on export of rice has been lifted with effect from 20th July, 2007.

Probe into cartelisation of cement industry by MRTPC

1682. SHRI B.K. HARIPRASAD : Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Monopolies and Restrictive Trade Practices Commission (MRTPC) is probing cartelisation of cement industry and jacking up cement prices in the domestic market;

(b) whether the MRTPC is not empowered to impose penalties and enforce disciplinary action against the cartel member and whether MRTPC cannot go beyond issuing a 'cease and desist' order; and